Tribal Participatory Research on a National Scale:
The Story of the First National Study of American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start

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Goals for Today

• Brief overview of FACES and motivation for AI/AN FACES

• Description of the collaborative processes to design, implement, and disseminate AI/AN FACES

• Discussion on approaches and how it can serve as a model for future research
The Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES)

• Since 1997, FACES has been a regular source of nationally-representative data on Head Start programs, centers, classrooms, children, and families

• With these data, FACES offers a picture of:
  – Head Start children’s school readiness
    • Health and physical development
    • Cognitive development
    • Social emotional development
  – Head Start program performance
    • Quality
    • Child/family outcomes

• FACES data are used to:
  – Track changes over time in the Head Start population, services, quality, and outcomes
  – Identify ways to improve Head Start services
Region XI Head Start: Location & Population Served

Region XI serves half of the AI/AN children in Head Start.

Region XI also serves some non-AI/AN children.

**States with Region XI Head Start Programs**

37,068 AI/AN Children Served by Regions I-XI Head Start in 2014-2015

- 16,860; 45%
- 20,208; 55%

19,674 AI/AN and Non-AI/AN Children Served by Region XI Head Start in 2014-2015

- 16,860; 86%
- 2,814; 14%

Source: Head Start Program Information Report
Historically, Region XI Head Start programs have not been included in FACES

• Reasons
  – Tribal concerns about research
  – Unique protocols for research involving sovereign tribal nations
  – Resource-intensive nature of planning and implementing study according to best tribal practices

• As a result
  – National descriptions of Head Start do not include the experiences of Region XI programs, children, and families
  – Region XI lacks important national-level data on the children and families they serve – without which they are at disadvantage for knowing the needs of children and families or how best to meet those needs
AI/AN FACES Timeline

- **Fall 2013**: AI/AN FACES Planning began
- **Spring 2015**: Region XI Program Recruitment
- **Fall 2014**: Region XI Program Recruitment
- **Fall 2015**: Child and Family Data Collection
- **Spring 2016**: Child, Family, Teacher, Classroom, and Program Data Collection
- **2016-2017**: Analysis and Reporting begin
The American Indian and Alaska Native FACES Workgroup

Region XI Head Start Directors

Tribal Early Childhood Researchers

AI/AN FACES Workgroup

ACF Federal Staff

Study Research Organization
Collaboration = Time + Dedication

- **First AI/AN FACES Workgroup convening:** December 2013, National Museum of the American Indian

- **Since then …**
  - **15+ in-person events**, including:
    - AI/AN FACES Workgroup
    - OHS tribal consultation
    - Conference presentations
    - Other stakeholder meetings/presentations, such as the STAC and NCAI
  - **180+ phone calls/virtual meetings**
    - AI/AN FACES Workgroup monthly calls
    - Scheduled and ad hoc working group calls
What do we want to know?

• AI/AN FACES collaborative design process

**Guidance on Study Design**
- What is the population of interest?
- What do we want to know?
- How do we measure it?
- How might AI/AN FACES align, adapt or add to the FACES design?
  - Developing new measures

**Sensitive Engagement with Tribal Communities**
- Engaging Head Start and tribal leaders nationally
How did we conduct the study?

- **AI/AN FACES culturally-grounded implementation**

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<tr>
<th>Recruiting Programs and Engaging Individuals</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Review study recruitment materials sent to selected programs (for example, “Agreement of Collaboration and Participation”)</td>
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<td>- Initial program outreach to programs pairs</td>
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<td>- Engage programs and staff</td>
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<td>- Engage children and families</td>
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<tr>
<th>Study Methods</th>
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<td>- Discussion on how to collect data: in-person, phone, or web options</td>
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<td>- Tokens of appreciation</td>
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<td>- Cross-cultural understanding training of field staff co-developed and co-led</td>
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<td>- Videos of AI/AN children and classrooms for additional grounding</td>
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<td>- Observation training onsite at a tribal Head Start program</td>
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How will we share our findings?

• AI/AN FACES continued engagement for dissemination

**Data Reporting**
- Developing analytic and dissemination priorities
- Reviewing findings and products
- Presenting to various audiences

**Data Access**
- Developing procedures for data access
- Reviewing future researchers’ plans to request data
Beyond Cultural Sensitivity

• Uniting different perspectives and talents for the same cause

• Building relationships through face-to-face interactions and maintaining them through ongoing virtual contact

• Raising challenging questions in the context of trusting relationships

• Asking questions and knowing the trusting relationships make any question okay

• Achieving peer learning for all
Acknowledgments

- Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation and Office of Head Start staff
- AI/AN FACES Workgroup
- The 21 Region XI Head Start programs, staff, families, and communities
For More Information

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Visit the AI/AN FACES website at

Questions for Discussion

Design:
- When does engagement begin?
- How deep does engagement go?

Implementation:
- What approaches are needed for culturally-grounded engagement of communities?
- How will the study be conducted? Who will collect the data?

• Dissemination:
- Who do you involve in dissemination? How do you involve community partners in dissemination?
- What is the best way to report findings to different audiences?
- How do you ensure appropriate and transparent use of data?
- How do you reach out to indigenous scholars to use the data?